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Focusing on Jesus Our Victory

Have you found yourself becoming distracted from your relationship with God? It happens to most of us at some point in our life when we realize we are going through the motions and are no longer actively seeking after intimate communion with our Heavenly Father. As I write this, it is not a condemnation to you if you are struggling. But it is for a hope that you can get back to, a depth of love with God each day.

One of the greatest tactics of the enemy is to convince us to live a busy lifestyle. The enemy doesn't sell it to us in the name of busyness, but instead, he uses cares and concerns over problems that arise in our day. Finances, family, emotional issues, a worry of our future are all areas of needs that we face every day. If we are not careful though, we can see our time disappear a little at a time as we attempt to fix these things. Each of us can look back and see seasons where we put out fire after fire of problems without realizing we lost our focus on God's plan. Without realizing it, we can look at the circumstances as our problems instead of the real source which is the enemy.

A classic example is when a two thousand pound bull full of power and strength attacks a red cape over and over again until all of its strength is gone. Always attacking the problem in front but never attacking the tiny man holding the cape. In many ways, we can fall for the same deception as the devil wields a cape of circumstances in front of us causing us to attack and as we look up, there it is again. Years can go by before we realize we are being played by a master manipulator, a thief hiding in the dark.

There is a well-known verse that we have all quoted before however let's look at it a little closer. John 10:10 says "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly." I have always considered this as a warning of a murderer running around with a blunt object killing and destroying everything in his way, but a closer look shows us a different picture.

From the word thief, it shows an image of someone who is motivated to steal and destroy your life. To rob you of everything special and important that you hold dear to your heart. Your health, family, joy, finances and your calling are all his target. Yet, his main tactics are not those of a robbery at gunpoint, but more of a small-time thief, a bandit who is skilled at sneaking in and out undetected. Where you don't realize that you have been stolen from until long after it was done. This kind of thievery can be the worst kind of damage, a little at a time over and over again.

Jesus also says the enemy comes to kill; he can't help himself, his very nature pushes him to kill. I thought this meant he was like an ax murderer, but a closer look at the proper interpretation of the word kill shows us an entirely different image. It shows a picture of a willing sacrifice as a religious animal sacrifice on an altar; it means to surrender something we

care for to death. In other words, the type of killer Jesus is warning us of is one who will convince us to hand over to him the most important things in our life so that they can be sacrificed.

The final word Jesus uses to describe the thief is his nature to destroy. Think of someone who will drain every part of you, your time, finances, love, joy, peace, family, strength and time. Then looking at you laying on the ground broken and empty as they step over you and walk away with great joy that they could steal all of that from you. Happily leaving you totally empty and destroyed. This will be a shocking end to many people who did not realize the enemy has been in the midst of their life for years slowly and quietly stealing the goodness of God from right in front of their eyes. Seeing him walk away with the promises that God gave them for their family and their calling as he steps over their broken lives.

Thank God for the other part of this verse, the most critical element for us to receive. Jesus says that to us He comes for us to have life, this paints a picture of you and I receiving joy and a flowing life on a continuous daily basis. An ongoing life that is continually freely flowing every second of every day. He then adds that it's to be ours "more abundantly," not just enough to make it through but beyond the extraordinary is how much God wants for us.

What a picture of the two contrasting options we can have in this life! We can chase after the problems and waste the years of our life, or we can chase after Jesus and live in His life and extra abundance. Jesus has given us the power to overcome the strategies of the devil, but the cost is to trust in Him and His ways, to trust in His unbending love for you, and to trust in His directions for your life.

I want to encourage you today that even though the enemy has plans of destruction for you God has a plan for you of victory and life more abundantly. Stop fixing every problem and see the one who's causing those problems; the enemy hiding behind the cape. Watch him flee when he sees you looking at him as your target instead of that cape. You already have authority over Him and yielding to Jesus, you will find victory over every single situation from the power of God. You qualify for this power because that life of Christ is flowing through right now, every moment of every day. He loves you and is for you, let's focus on Him and not be distracted anymore!

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